

00534

1980/09/00

SECRET

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE REPORT

THE DEEP OCEAN AND DEFENSE

1964-1965

SECRET
C-2

NOFORN
SECRET

~~SECRET~~

LURING DEEP: CHINA'S LAND DEFENSE STRATEGY

DDB-2610-31-80 (U)

Information Cutoff Date: 1 March 1980

~~WARNING NOTICE~~
~~Intelligence Sources and Methods Involved~~

This is a Department of Defense Intelligence Document
prepared by the Eastern Division,
Directorate for Research,
Defense Intelligence Agency

Author: [REDACTED]
China Branch, Ground Force Section

CLASSIFIED BY MULTIPLE SOURCES

~~REVIEW ON 1 AUGUST 1990~~

~~NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

PREFACE

(U) This publication presents an analysis of the luring deep strategy which forms the basis of China's land defense strategy against a Soviet attack. It is intended to provide a better understanding of Chinese land defense strategy and the effect that China's comparative military weakness vis-a-vis the Soviet Union has on strategy options. Primary emphasis has been placed on how the strategy will be implemented in the defense of key border areas of China, e.g., Shenyang, Beijing, and Urumqi Military Regions. The report also addresses the characteristics of the strategy, statements by both Chinese supporters and critics of the strategy, and the future of the strategy over the next decade. The scope of analysis is limited in two respects. First, the publication does not address the applicability of the luring deep strategy under nuclear warfare conditions; rather, discussion is confined to Chinese ground force implementation of the strategy against a multidivisional Soviet conventional ground attack. This is not to suggest, however, that the basic luring deep concept is inoperative in a conflict involving tactical nuclear weapons. Second, this report makes no attempt to analyze Chinese Navy, Air Force, or Strategic Rocket Force deployments to determine if, or in what manner, these forces would support the luring deep strategy. It is anticipated that these other aspects of the strategy will be addressed in future publications.

(U) The study is intended to supplement the Defense Intelligence Report, The Sino-Soviet Dispute: A Comparison of Military Forces in the Border Area (U) (DDI-2680-42-77-SAO). This work deals primarily with opposing Chinese and Soviet force structures and capabilities along the Sino-Soviet border but does not treat in detail the implementation of the luring deep strategy in the defense of China. Specific aspects of the luring deep strategy can also be found in DIA Intelligence Appraisals DIAIPPR 82-78, Improvements to the 65th Army's Capabilities (U), and DIAIPPR 182-79, Urumqi Military Region Force Improvements (U).

(U) The author expresses his deep appreciation to [REDACTED] of the China/Far East Division (DE-3) of the Directorate for Estimates for their contribution in writing the Outlook portion of this publication.

(U) Each classified title and heading in this report has been properly marked; all those unmarked are unclassified.

(U) Questions and comments concerning this publication should be referred in writing to the Defense Intelligence Agency (ATTN: DB-2B), Washington, D.C. 20301. Requests for additional copies should be forwarded through command approval channels, as appropriate, to DIA (ATTN: RTS-2A), using DD Form 1142, Interagency Document Request, in accordance with DIA Manual 59-3, DIA Reference Library.

~~SECRET~~

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY	vii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE LURING DEEP STRATEGY	1
a. Support for the Strategy	1
(1) The Formative Years	1
(2) Post-Liberation Years (1950-1966)	1
(3) Recent Commentary	5
b. Criticism of the Strategy	6
3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STRATEGY	10
4. CHINESE ARMY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LURING DEEP STRATEGY	13
a. Chinese Reaction to the 1969 Border Clashes	13
b. The Defense of Beijing	13
c. The Defense of Beijing and Shenyang MRs	17
d. The Defense of Heilongjiang Province	21
e. The Mobility Factor in the Defense of Northeast China	23
f. Defense of Urumqi MR	24
5. OUTLOOK	26
6. CONCLUSIONS	28

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		
1. Map	- China's Four Northern Military Regions	2
2. Map	- Key Areas in the Formative Years of the Luring Deep Strategy	4
3. Map	- Selective Sino-Soviet Border Areas	7
4. Map	- Chinese Response to 1969 Border Clashes	14
5. Map	- Chinese Defense of Beijing Against Soviet Attack from Mongolia	16
6. Photo	- A Portion of the Zhangjiakou Defense Area	18
7. Map	- Opposing Ground Force Deployments	20
8. Map	- Main Force Defense Posture in Heilongjiang Province	22
9. Map	- Urumqi Military Region	25
10. Map	- Chinese Ground Order of Battle in Urumqi Military Region	27

~~SECRET~~

SUMMARY

(C) The luring deep strategy has been criticized by some Chinese officials and Western analysts as anachronistic and ill suited to meet China's defense needs. Particularly disturbing to these critics is the fact that several key areas which play a significant role in China's economic life will fall into Soviet hands if the strategy is implemented. Despite this fact, the Chinese leadership remains committed to luring deep as the only feasible strategy for dealing with a superior enemy.

(C) The luring deep strategy was formulated by Mao Zedong in the 1920s and 1930s to combat Nationalist troops during the Chinese Civil War and has remained the essence of China's land defensive strategy ever since. The term "luring deep" is a necessary euphemism which justifies the temporary surrender of portions of China when faced by a superior invading force. It has been reluctantly adopted in the face of Chinese military inferiority against their principal opponent--the USSR. Today the strategy accepts two military realities: China cannot stop a major Soviet attack at the border, and Chinese ground forces do not have the mobility to conduct an orderly delay or withdrawal without risk of being overrun or bypassed. However, the Chinese believe that the large size of the country gives them a natural military advantage: territory can be given up to the advancing enemy whose supply lines will become increasingly extended and more vulnerable to interdiction.

(C) The luring deep strategy requires that an enemy penetration be resisted through an "active defense---...a defense for the purpose of counterattacking and taking the offense." An increasing level of resistance is directed against enemy forces as they penetrate farther into China, first by lightly armed border defense units, later by artillery-heavy garrison divisions and militia forces, and finally by main force divisions which are tasked to halt the Soviet offensive and launch counterattacks to eliminate the enemy threat.

(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL) The deployment pattern of Chinese Army main force units in the strategically important military regions of Beijing, Shenyang, and Urumqi supports implementation of the luring deep strategy. In Beijing Military Region (MR), the orientation of main force armies is toward the defense of the capital city of Beijing. Such units are deployed well back from the Sino-Mongolian border, with the 65th Army tasked to defend the main invasion route from Mongolia to Beijing. An elaborate defense area at Zhangjiakou has been constructed to assist the 65th Army in accomplishing this mission. Establishment of these defensive positions and the decision to conduct a determined conventional defense are acceptable within the overall concept of the luring deep strategy, provided such actions are taken in areas where the Chinese have anticipated that the military balance will have shifted in their favor and the opportunity to conduct a counteroffensive is present. In Shenyang MR, main force units are concentrated south and east of the Manchurian Plain, suggesting that a deep Soviet penetration of the MR and loss of the key economic areas of Qiqihar, Harbin, and the Daqing oilfields will be allowed. Apparent acceptance of the loss of these areas has sparked criticism of the strategy and demands for a more forward defense posture in northeast China. In traditionally vulnerable but important

~~SECRET~~

Urumqi MR, the Chinese conducted a limited ground force reinforcement to strengthen the defensive posture of the MR during and following the Sino-Vietnamese conflict. The deployment of these new units well back from the Sino-Soviet border confirms the continued validity of the luring deep strategy and requires the Soviets to assemble a larger invasion force than before the reinforcement if the capture of the capital city of Urumqi is a major goal of the attack.

(S) The future applicability of the luring deep strategy will be determined in large part by the success of the Chinese ground force modernization program. Military leaders are currently engaged in the study of modern warfighting concepts and weapon systems in planning for a more effective defense against Soviet forces. In the latter half of the 1980s, a number of ground force improvements are expected to occur which should enable China to improve its defensive capabilities in areas appreciably closer to the Sino-Soviet border. Although these enhancements will enable the Chinese to exact a greater price from invading Soviet forces, they will still be insufficient to defend the integrity of China's border territories.

(S) China can only adopt a pure forward defense strategy when Sino-Soviet military capabilities in the border area approach parity. Such a reordering of capabilities is beyond China's grasp in the 1980s and may even be unattainable by the end of the century.

(S) Although the Chinese have adopted luring deep out of necessity, they consider the strategy to be an effective deterrent to a Soviet conventional force attack aimed at imposition of a new Chinese regime subservient to Moscow's interests. For the Soviet military planner, the prospects of a protracted war, long-term commitment of troops, and expense in terms of money and casualties loom as significant factors deterring a major conventional land invasion. The weakness of the strategy--its inability to deter a limited Soviet attack--has required Beijing, on one hand, to try to convince the USSR that even a limited conflict would eventually lead to protracted war and, on the other hand, to continue its active foreign policy to bring international pressure on Moscow to deter any military action against China.

~~SECRET~~

Luring Deep

Actively defending and luring the enemy in deep are the basic principles of our strategy for winning a future antiaggression war. Chairman Mao said that if a fisherman doesn't give any bait to the fish, the fish will not be caught. Resisting the enemy outside the country has never been a good method. Our country and our socialist system determine that our strategic principle should be one of the active defense. In dealing with aggressors, we will strike at the enemy after we allow him to come in and then strategically gain mastery by striking him again. The tricks peddled by Lin Biao and the "gang of four"—such as "locking horns" with the enemy "lock, stock, and barrel"—totally reflected the passive defense of resisting the enemy outside the country, a method which has long since been criticized. The situation will be reasonable and favorable for us and our struggle will be easier only if we allow the enemy to come in and then strike at him. Only by doing so can we force the enemy to scatter his forces, carry the burden on his shoulders, and be encircled and trapped by all the people; only by doing so can we utilize our strong points to attack the enemy's weak points and destroy the enemy troops one after another. However, luring the enemy in deep does not mean allowing the enemy to go wherever he likes; it means forcing him to move in the direction we want, organizing a strong defense with our priorities well-placed, preventing the enemy from driving deep into our areas, leading him to battlefields prepared and organized in advance, and, in accordance with actual conditions, concentrating our superior forces on wiping out the enemy troops one by one by using Chairman Mao's 10 major principles on military affairs. We must adhere to the principle of protracted war. We firmly believe that by carrying out an arduous and protracted struggle, we will be able to gradually change the balance of forces between the enemy and ourselves, carry out a strategic counteroffensive, and win final victory.*

* (U) Defense Minister Xu Xiangqian, "Heighten Vigilance, Be Ready to Fight," Red Flag article, 30 July 78

~~SECRET~~

1. INTRODUCTION

(U) In September 1979, Xiao Ke, the President and First Political Commissar of the PLA Military Academy, in an address to the student body and faculty, decried the mechanical application of Mao Zedong's military thought to war under modern conditions, played down Mao's military contributions in the revolutionary past, and called for the emancipation of the military mind through careful study of the strategy, tactics, and military technology of foreign armies. Singled out for attack was the "luring the enemy in deep" strategy which he criticized:

To follow the method of luring the enemy in deep used by the Red Army during the Jiangxi period and to apply it mechanically today would be absurd. At that time, we occupied no cities and had no modern industry; we took everything we needed from the enemy, and when the enemy came, we "strengthened our defenses and cleared the fields to lure the enemy in deep, throwing open our arms and inviting him to come in. Therefore we must study new ways of war in accordance with the developing situation.

Xiao Ke's speech was significant in several respects. By his thinly veiled attack on Mao, Xiao was calling upon People's Liberation Army (PLA) members to "emancipate the mind," to free themselves of the mental shackles of Mao's military thought, and to seek new solutions for China's current military problems. By attacking a specific part of Mao's legacy, the luring deep strategy, he argued that an alternate strategy should be developed that would assign greater priority to China's cities and modern industries. That a personality of Xiao's stature should deliver the speech was also significant. As head of the PLA Military Academy, he was in an excellent position to influence any modification of China's military doctrine, strategy, and tactics. His recent elevation to the Vice Minister of Defense status suggests that his views are also shared by other members of China's ruling hierarchy. However, Xiao Ke's criticism of the luring deep strategy was far from unique. Indeed, the applicability of the strategy to China's defense needs has been a contentious issue since the formative stages of the Chinese Communist movement.

(U) The Chinese critics of luring deep are joined by some Western analysts who share the belief that the current strategy is anachronistic and ill-suited to meet China's defensive needs. Others argue that the days of luring deep are numbered and that the progress of defense modernization will soon allow the Chinese to abandon luring deep and adopt a more forward defense strategy. In light of this criticism, the purpose of this study is to outline the development and characteristics of the luring deep strategy and, in the process, to identify areas over which debate has centered through the decades. The study will also attempt to explain how the luring deep strategy has been implemented by the Chinese ground forces. Finally, it will assess the future of the strategy in light of the expected pace of military modernization.

SECRET

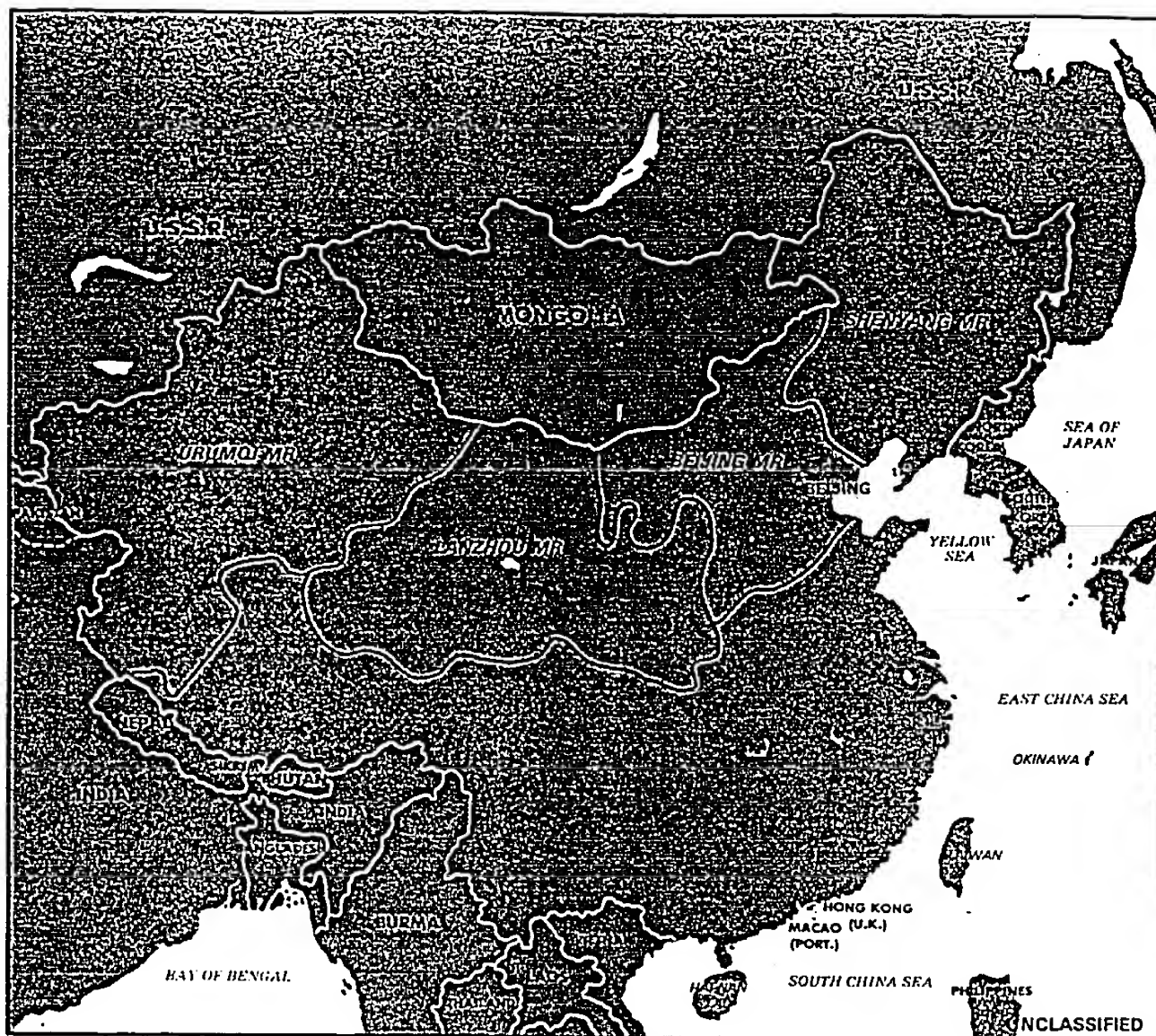


Figure 1. (U) China's four Northern Military Regions

DDB-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

2. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE LURING DEEP STRATEGY

a. Support for the Strategy

(1) The Formative Years

(U) Chinese Nationalist efforts during the late 1920s and early 1930s to root out the fledgling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from its Jinggang Shan sanctuary in Jiangxi Province led Mao Zedong to initially develop the luring deep strategy (figure 2). In a commentary on this early period, Su Yu, a Vice Minister of Defense and strategist in his own right, has provided some insights into why the strategy was developed and the nature of the initial opposition to it. Su stated that during the Jiangxi period, the CCP faced an enemy with modern equipment and a force 10 times larger than that of the Red Army. To conserve strength and await the opportunity to defeat the enemy, Mao ordered the army to engage in "active defense, first luring the enemy deep into our territory in a planned way to create a situation favorable to us and unfavorable to the enemy." When the opportune moment presented itself, the Army launched a counteroffensive and fought quick decisive battles to destroy the enemy.

(U) Following the Long March of 1934-35 and the establishment of the CCP's headquarters and capital at Yanan, the luring deep strategy was again employed by Mao, who at this time was the recognized leader of the party. When a Nationalist offensive of 230,000 men was launched to seize the Communist capital, Mao ordered his 20,000-man army to give up Yanan to evade the brunt of the enemy attack. Then, by employing "wear and tear" tactics, concentrating superior forces against weaker or isolated Nationalist units, attacking behind enemy lines, and striking at enemy reinforcements, the balance of military might was eventually altered and the Nationalists were forced to withdraw from that region.

(2) Post-Liberation Years (1950-66)

(U) For the first 15 years following the establishment of the PRC, there appeared to be little criticism of the luring deep strategy. However, in 1965, as a result of a potential two-front threat from the US in Vietnam and from the Soviets on the northern border, Chinese leaders met to reassess their defense strategy. Following this reassessment, the suitability of the luring deep strategy was again validated. The predominant view was expressed by Lin Biao in his classic article, "Long Live the Victory of People's War." In addition to supporting the basic strategy, Lin criticized the alternative approach of "defending every mountain pass and protecting every city":

In order to annihilate the enemy, we must adopt the policy of luring him in deep and abandon some cities and districts of our own accord in a planned way, so as to let him in...We must let the enemy become elated, stretch out his ten fingers and become hopelessly bogged down. Thus we can concentrate superior forces to destroy the enemy forces one by one, to eat them up--mouthful by mouthful...We are firmly against dividing up our forces to defend all positions and putting up resistance at every place for fear that our territory might be lost and our pots and pans smashed, since this can neither wipe out the enemy forces nor hold cities or localities.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

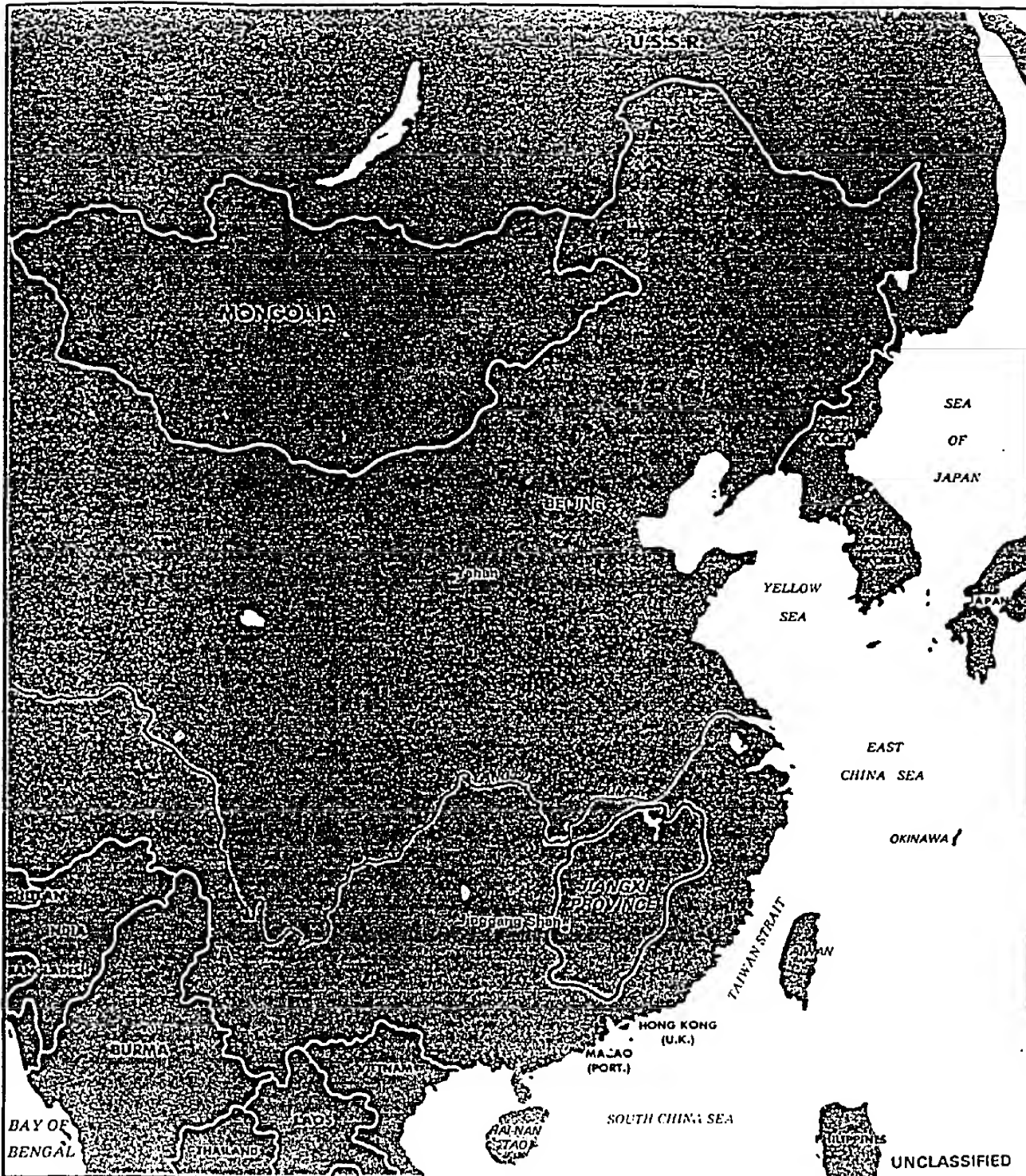


Figure 2. (U) Key areas in the formative years of the Luring Deep Strategy

DD8-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

(3) Recent Commentary

(U) There is evidence, based on a number of open source articles written on the subject, that the luring deep strategy was again the subject of debate in 1977, shortly after Mao's death. Perhaps as a result of this debate, Su Yu, as noted earlier, wrote a strong defense of luring deep in his People's Daily article, "Great Victory for Chairman Mao's Guidelines on War." Another article in defense of the strategy was "Great Strategic Switch in the Red Army from Guerrilla Warfare to Mobile Warfare," written by Guo Huaruo, then believed to be the Deputy Commandant of the Academy of Political Science. Guo defended the validity of the luring deep strategy against those "adventurists" opposing the loss of territory and the destruction of portions of China which would result from the implementation of the strategy. Guo argued that the object of strategic retreat was to conserve military strength until conditions allowed a counter-offensive, and that the failure to retreat in the face of the onslaught of a strong enemy threatened the annihilation of Chinese forces. Harking back to the analogy used by Lin Biao in 1965, Guo stated, "If you refuse to let the pots and pans of some households be smashed over a short period of time, you will cause the smashing of pots and pans of all the people to go on over a long period of time."

(U) In July 1978, the strategy issue was again addressed in Defense Minister Xu Xiangqian's article commemorating the founding of the PLA. As Su Yu did on the same occasion a year earlier, Xu averred that the luring deep strategy and active defense remained the essence of China's defense strategy. He opposed "locking horns" with the enemy "lock, stock and barrel," claiming that it reflected the passive defense "tricks" of Lin Biao and the "Gang of Four." Stressing that luring deep was an organized and planned strategy, he noted:

...luring the enemy in deep does not mean allowing the enemy to go wherever he likes; it means forcing him to move in the direction we want, organizing a strong, defense with our priorities well placed, preventing the enemy from driving deep into our areas, leading him to battlefields prepared and organized in advance, and, in accordance with actual conditions, concentrating our superior forces on wiping out the enemy troops one by one by using Chairman Mao's 10 major principles on military affairs. We must adhere to the principle of protracted war.

~~(S//NOFORN//UNINTEL)~~ In 1979, another Chinese official, Vice Premier Geng Biao, acknowledged during a visit to a Western country that it was virtually impossible for Chinese forces to hold a defensive line in the event of a concerted Soviet offensive. He remarked that current defense planning called for a strategic retreat 500-1,000 kilometers into the countryside and a protracted war making extensive use of militia and regular army units.

(U) In 1979, the major commentary on defense policy was reserved for Defense Minister Xu Xiangqian, who presented the views of the leadership in a Red Flag article commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the PRC. Xu's article was conspicuous by its brief treatment of the luring deep strategy, particularly when compared with his 1978 address. Despite this terseness, Xu endorsed luring deep by stating, "Strategically, we have adopted a policy of active defense. Our national defense must follow this policy and must not go against it."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~(S//NOFORN//UNINTEL)~~ The views of Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping on luring deep have shown a remarkable consistency through the years and mark him as one of the more pessimistic among the leadership regarding Chinese defense capabilities. For example, in 1974 he informed a visiting foreign delegation that a large Soviet force probably could capture Beijing and penetrate to a line along the Yangtze River. However, Deng felt that at this point the war would swing in the favor of Chinese forces waging a protracted and guerrilla war. In 1977 he restated his position to a visiting Western military leader:

The Russians are welcome if they want to come. They can perhaps occupy Beijing. But the deeper they push into the country, the more difficult it will become for them to support their forces. Our tactics is people's war.

~~(S//NOFORN)~~ In addition to military inferiority, natural geography has also influenced the adoption of the luring deep strategy. During the US Secretary of Defense visit to China in January 1980, members of the US delegation were told by Wu Xiuquan, a Deputy Chief of Staff of the PLA, that China's defense strategy had been shaped by having the world's largest population and ample room for maneuver. Quoting Defense Minister Xu, Wu reaffirmed the viability of luring deep by stating that "if the USSR fights its way in, we can give up territory and continue to fight."

b. Criticism of the Strategy

(U) From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that a significant number of individuals making up the Chinese leadership have remained committed to the luring deep strategy throughout the decades. However, it is also evident that many of the statements represent a defense rather than a simple affirmation of the strategy. An understanding of the criticism of the strategy would be helpful in providing insight into possible alternatives to luring deep.

(U) Opposition to luring deep dates back to the Jiangxi period of the CCP's resistance against the Chinese Nationalist Army. At that time, the leading critic of the strategy and the advocate of a "passive defense" approach to dealing with the Nationalists allegedly was Wang Ming, one of Mao's political rivals. According to Su Yu:

[Wang] dared not break through the enemy's encirclement to fight in the enemy's rear area, nor did he dare to launch effective attacks on exterior lines or to lure the enemy and await an opportunity to wipe out the enemy force....fearing a loss of territory, he advocated resisting the enemy outside the territory by deploying our troops at every pass, setting up defenses everywhere, fighting defensive actions at every step, launching short surprise attacks and engaging in block-house and attrition warfare. As a result, the Red Army suffered grave losses and lost the central revolutionary base area.

(U) In 1965, Luo Ruiqing, then a Chief of Staff of the PLA, wrote an article in Red Flag commemorating the Soviet victory over Germany in World War II. Luo praised the Soviet use of luring deep strategy in combating the invading Germans but departed from the original luring deep strategy by stating:

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

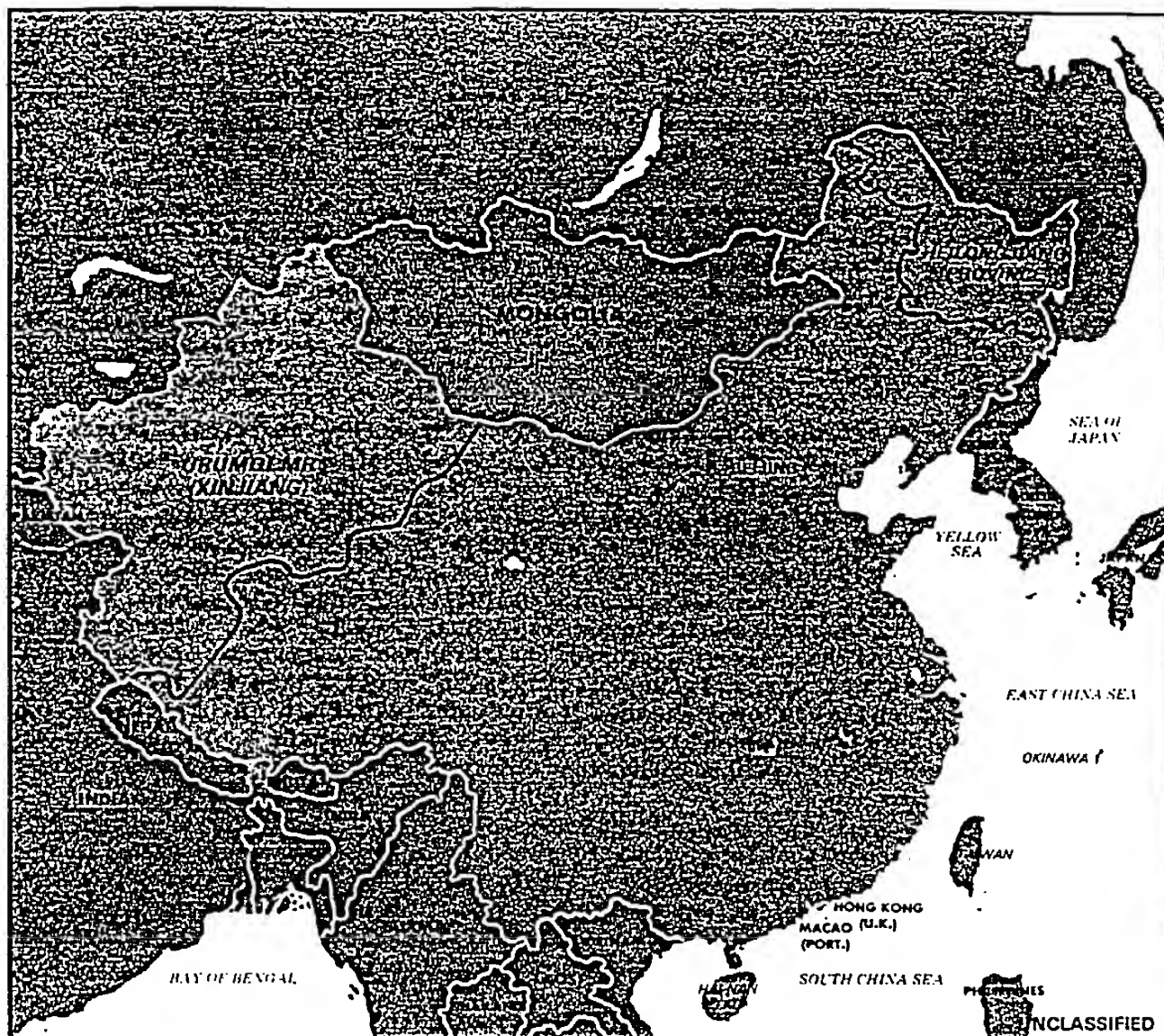


Figure 3. (U) Selective Sino-Soviet border areas

DD8-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

It was precisely by adopting this strategy (active defense)...that the Soviet Union forced Hitler to halt his troops before high mountains and outside fortified cities along the far-flung battleline stretching from Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad to the Caucasus, so that they were caught in an impasse, unable either to advance or to retreat, and suffered tremendous losses. Over 300,000 German fascist crack troops were encircled and annihilated in the Battle of Stalingrad, which marked the turning point of World War II. Such was the brilliant..... strategy that brought Hitler to his doom. Experience shows that only by energetically wiping out the enemy's effectives is it possible to change the enemy situation, to defend cities and other places, and finally to defeat the aggressor.

(U) Luo's article significantly departed from the traditional tenets of luring deep. Luo's references to halting troops before high mountains and outside fortified cities; the far-flung battlefield; and to the defense of Stalingrad as the turning point of World War II seemed to value "passive defense" and accorded cities a greater importance in the strategy than normally granted under Mao's concepts. Two years later, Luo was condemned for this position in a Peking Review article written by individuals assigned to the offices of the Headquarters of the General Staff of the PLA. The article stated, "Luo Ruiqing has always opposed Chairman Mao's strategic concept and stood for passive defenseLuo Ruiqing also said: 'Now conditions are different,' and that the only method to be used was that of 'blocking the water.' Such absurd statements are nothing new. They are simply the same trash of passive defense, of 'engaging the enemy outside the gates,' which was criticized by Chairman Mao as early as the thirties."

~~(C)~~ The theme that new conditions required formulation of a new strategy, one based on a positional defense well forward ("blocking the water") and a stronger commitment to the defense of cities, has pervaded criticism of luring deep. This theme was surfaced again in 1977 in an article written by the Military Department of the PLA Military and Political Academy entitled "It's Still Better to Lure the Enemy in Deep." The article supported the overall concept of luring deep as the only method of preserving military strength in the face of the more sophisticated armament and equipment of "Soviet revisionism and US imperialism." However, the article also noted that "great changes had taken place in the situations on both the enemy side and our side" thereby requiring adaptation of "our strategic guiding concept." The specific areas of controversy were indicated in the following statement:

In a future war against aggression, in what direction should we lure the enemy in deep, at what point would it become favorable to us and unfavorable to the enemy, which key points must be strongly defended--these are questions to be decided....

Evidence that the debate was widespread throughout the PLA was indicated by the admonition that the resolution of these questions would be made only by the Party Central Committee and the Military Commission and that the field armies, local forces, and the broad masses of the militia must "...act according to the unified operational intentions of the higher authorities" and not on their own.

~~SECRET~~

(S) The criticism of luring deep continued into 1973, as evidenced by the publication of an article in the Liberation Army Daily (LAD) entitled "Cities to Become Stalingrads in Event of Invasion." The article's significance lies in its resurrection of the arguments expressed in the Luo Ruiqing article praising the Soviet defense of Stalingrad. The article noted that the surrendering of certain cities in the execution of the luring deep strategy had become a "standing issue" of debate in the PLA. In the article, the overall concept of "luring deep" was again endorsed as an effective method used by the weak against the strong. However, it departed again from the traditional strategy by arguing that when the enemy is lured in, certain cities and territory must be stubbornly held. Noting that there are cities of political, economic, and military significance to China located in the path of a potential enemy invasion, the article recommended a Stalingrad-like defense of these strategically important cities.

(C/NOPORN/WHINTEL) In 1979, Xiao Ke's address to the PLA Military Academy, mentioned earlier, indicated that the question of the relevance of luring deep to contemporary China remained. Additionally, in early 1980, a Chinese attache serving in a Western country narrowed the geographical dimensions of the strategy debate by stating:

The old ways of Mao require change under modern conditions. The old concept of luring the enemy deep into a pocket won't work in places like Heilongjiang but might still be useful in places like Xinjiang. Industrial and strategic sites make the difference. In the northeast and Heilongjiang, in particular, we must not give up any space (figure 3).

(U) In summary, the critics of the luring deep strategy likely fall into two factions. The first group, which might be labeled the "blockhouse" faction for its advocacy of a forward defense posture and resisting the enemy outside the country, appears to have been a significant force in the formative period of the CCP. Currently, it appears to exercise little or no influence over defense policy. The second faction generally supports the concept of luring deep but also argues that there are key areas of China which cannot be given up in the execution of the strategy. This group undoubtedly has some influence in present policymaking circles, as suggested by the number of articles published in support of its viewpoint.

~~SECRET~~

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STRATEGY

(U) From this background on the development of the luring deep strategy and the statements of both its proponents and detractors, it is possible to derive the principles and characteristics of the strategy. These may be stated as follows:

-- (U) The strategy is a no-alternative strategy based on military realities. Luring deep is predicated on Chinese recognition of their military inferiority against principal opponents. Its development and refinement during the Jianqxi and Yanan periods represented Mao's solution to the basic problem of how an out-numbered and poorly equipped army could eventually defeat a stronger enemy. The strategy's vitality and applicability throughout the decades have reflected China's continued military inferiority against its major potential enemies. In his defense of luring deep, Lin Biao stated that the militarily weak have only three other alternatives when fighting a stronger opponent: conduct a preemptive attack, stand still and be annihilated, or surrender. As none of these alternatives is practical or desirable, the weak have no alternative but to adopt the luring deep strategy. From this it is evident that the Chinese closely link the adoption of the alternative strategies--forward defense or luring deep--with a comparative assessment of military capabilities. Thus, the strategy used to defend China from an invasion emanating from Vietnam will differ from the approach taken to meet the Soviet threat from the north. Correspondingly, in the minds of the leadership any major change in strategy to meet the Soviet threat will require a significant closing of the military gap between the two countries.

-- (U) The strategy envisions a gradual change in the balance of forces through protracted war. While the strategy accepts military inferiority as the driving force for its adoption, it does not accept this condition as a permanent one. Instead, it postulates that in the course of luring the enemy in deep, the balance of military power will gradually shift in favor of China. The means by which the Chinese will accomplish this is protracted war, involving initial attrition of the enemy and ultimately his total annihilation. This changing balance of military power has been formalized by Mao Zedong into a three-stage process, namely, the strategic defensive, the strategic stalemate, and the strategic offensive. During the conduct of these phases, three principal forms of land combat are to be employed: mobile warfare, positional warfare, and guerrilla warfare. Despite popular Western perceptions, the Chinese consider mobile warfare to be the decisive form of combat, with positional and guerrilla warfare playing an important but nevertheless supplementary role in achieving the ultimate goal of the annihilation of the enemy. It is also important to note that the Chinese do not necessarily equate mobile warfare with mechanized warfare, as indicated in their accounts of the use of mobile warfare against the Nationalists during a period when they had little or no mechanized capability. In the Chinese context, mobile warfare is defined as "the form in which regular armies wage quick decisive offensive campaigns and battles on exterior lines along extensive fronts and over big areas of operation....Its characteristics are regular armies, superiority of forces in campaigns and battles, the offensive, and fluidity."

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ In late 1979 a Chinese official was asked to explain the concept of luring deep and active defense. He reemphasized the Chinese perception of the changing balance of forces in the conduct of the luring deep strategy by stating that in phase one, the enemy would be allowed to penetrate deeply; in phase two, the enemy would be stalled while friendly forces consolidated; and in phase three, the final destruction of the invader would be accomplished. The official also stressed that the enemy would be totally destroyed as opposed to being forced to withdraw.

~~(S)~~ This concept of changing balance of forces requires the Chinese to make some initial determination as to the geographical area within China where the military balance swings in their favor. As suggested in the 1979 LAD article, "It's Still Better To Lure the Enemy in Deep," the amount of Chinese territory that must be given up before equilibrium is reached has been a contentious issue in strategy discussions. Indications of the current Chinese assessment of where invading Soviet forces will lose their military advantage can be found in the present Chinese ground force deployment pattern. This subject will be addressed later in this report.

— (U) The strategy takes advantage of Chinese strengths and exploits enemy weaknesses. Luring deep takes into account not only China's military weaknesses but also its natural military-related strength--its large geographical size. As the world's third largest country in size, China can accept a major invasion of the country and still function as a national entity. Such a situation existed, for example, when the Japanese invaded China and occupied a large portion of the country from 1931 to 1945.

(U) The size of the country not only makes the strategy feasible but also exploits the inherent weakness of all modern armies--the high demands put on logistic support systems. As Nie Rongzhen, Vice Chairman of the Military Commission, has stated: "Our enemies rely on modernization and mechanization. Supplying itself with a large quantity of oil after entering our country is a big problem. Our country is big, communications lines are long, and militiamen will fight a guerrilla war everywhere and will constantly sabotage supply lines."

-- (U) The strategy requires an active defense. The luring deep strategy does not envision the passive acceptance of a deep enemy penetration. Rather, it requires that after the enemy is lured in, quick and decisive battles will be fought to destroy the enemy one by one. Concerning this aspect of the strategy, Mao wrote: "Active defense is also known as offensive defense or defense through decisive engagements....a defense for the purpose of counterattacking and taking the offense."

~~(S)~~ Carrying out this dictate, the Chinese have vowed that the Soviets will fight for every inch of territory they seize. However, the amount of resistance will increase in proportion to the depth of the attack. Therefore, invading Soviet forces will initially meet lightly armed border forces. As they

~~SECRET~~

penetrate deeper, stiffer resistance will be met from local force artillery-heavy garrison units blocking avenues of approach and militia forces attempting to disrupt and sabotage Soviet lines of communication. Pushing deeper into China and further extending their supply lines, the Soviets will meet China's main force infantry and armored divisions. These Chinese units, employing the tactics of positional defense, will counterattack against isolated Soviet units and exposed flanks, and operations in the Soviet rear will attempt to annihilate the attackers. Thus, the entire emphasis of the luring deep strategy is to actively resist the enemy with increasing ferocity, to aggressively choke off his supply lines, to gradually sap him of strength, and, when the conditions are favorable, to completely destroy him.

— (c) The strategy recognizes that key but vulnerable areas will be lost to the invaders. The most controversial principle of luring deep is that sizable forces should not be committed to the defense of key population and industrial centers if the destruction of those forces is considered likely. Mao's order to evacuate his wartime capital of Yanan in the face of superior Nationalist strength is the best case in point. Indeed, the other characteristics and principles of luring deep would not be applicable if an all-out defense were conducted of vulnerable cities and strategic points such as those located in northern Shenyang MR. This willingness to give up important but vulnerable areas of China in the interest of preserving the fighting strength of a major portion of the ground forces was stated by Lin Biao as follows:

When we are able to wipe you out, we do so with a vengeance; when we can't we see to it that you don't wipe us out. It is opportunism if one won't fight when one can win. It is adventurism if one insists on fighting when one can't win....It is because of the necessity of fighting that we admit the necessity of moving away.

(U) It is important to stress that the proponents of luring deep do not eschew entirely the defense of key areas. As noted above, they refuse to commit a sizable portion of their ground forces to the defense of cities or areas when they fear defeat. However, if conditions favor victory, a determined resistance, albeit still not a final one, will be offered. Supporting this position, Mao stated: "We must hold or take territory wherever the balance of forces makes it possible to do so or wherever such territory is significant for our campaigns or battles; to do otherwise would be a mistake."

(U) Thus, whether a city, industrial area, or strategic site is defended or not is once again a factor of assessed military capabilities. This assessment of comparative capabilities has impacted on how Chinese ground forces are deployed in the Sino-Soviet border region and has largely determined which cities and key areas facing the Soviet threat will be defended. The decisions made in these two areas have attracted the greatest criticism from the opponents of luring deep. To these individuals, a more forward defense posture is required to furnish greater protection to important economic and strategic sites which currently are outside the area of strong defense. The parameters of this defense, and the deployment pattern of Chinese ground forces in support of luring deep, are the subjects of the following section of this report.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4. CHINESE ARMY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LURING DEEP STRATEGY

~~(S)~~ Analysis of Chinese Army troop dispositions in the four northern military regions (MRs) bordering the Soviet Union and Mongolia since at least 1969 supports a commitment to implement the luring deep strategy. A closer examination of the ground force deployment pattern in Beijing, Shenyang, and Urumqi MRs will provide some insight into how the Chinese actually intend to employ the strategy in these areas. In this examination, the relationship between luring deep and the initial military reaction of the Chinese to the possibility of a Soviet attack in 1969 will be addressed. Of more significance, the ground force defense of Beijing City, Shenyang MR, and Urumqi MR will be treated in respect to the Chinese Army's expected execution of the luring deep strategy.

a. Chinese Reaction to the 1969 Border Clashes

~~(S)~~ Following the 1969 Sino-Soviet border clashes, the Chinese recognized the real potential for Soviet large-scale use of force against them and undertook a major shift in force deployments to prepare against an overland attack from the north (figure 4).

~~(S)~~ The serious and comprehensive nature of this response during the period from late 1969 into 1970 was highlighted by the deployment of five armies from South China to the northern border MRs or into reserve areas. Additionally, three armies and two army-level local force commands were formed either to fill gaps left by the relocated armies or to strengthen forces in the north. An intraregional realignment of forces also took place within Beijing MR, with two armies moving to the north and west of the capital city.

~~(S)~~ The significant aspect of these ground force deployments was the area into which the units moved. None of the armies from South China moved north of the city of Beijing; the majority moved into Wuhan MR, the southern portion of Lanzhou MR, and southern Beijing MR. The new units formed in the north also displayed a similar geographic disposition. The army that moved the farthest north was still some 700 kilometers from the Sino-Mongolian border and about 1,500 kilometers from the Sino-Soviet border. The great distance between the deployed armies and the immediate threat area suggests that the Chinese in 1969 and 1970 were constituting a reserve force in central China. Their positioning there, rather than in central Shenyang MR, also indicates that reinforcement of the immediate border areas was not intended and that the principles of the luring deep strategy continued to guide the decisions of military planners. These forces also may have been deployed to the area to reinforce the defense of Beijing or to add defense in depth should the capital city fall.

b. The Defense of Beijing

~~(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL)~~ In addition to this strategic redeployment of forces, the Chinese took steps to defend Beijing from a possible Soviet invasion originating from Mongolia. Prior to 1969, the 65th Army was the only main force army within Beijing MR guarding the northwestern approaches to the capital city.

~~SECRET~~

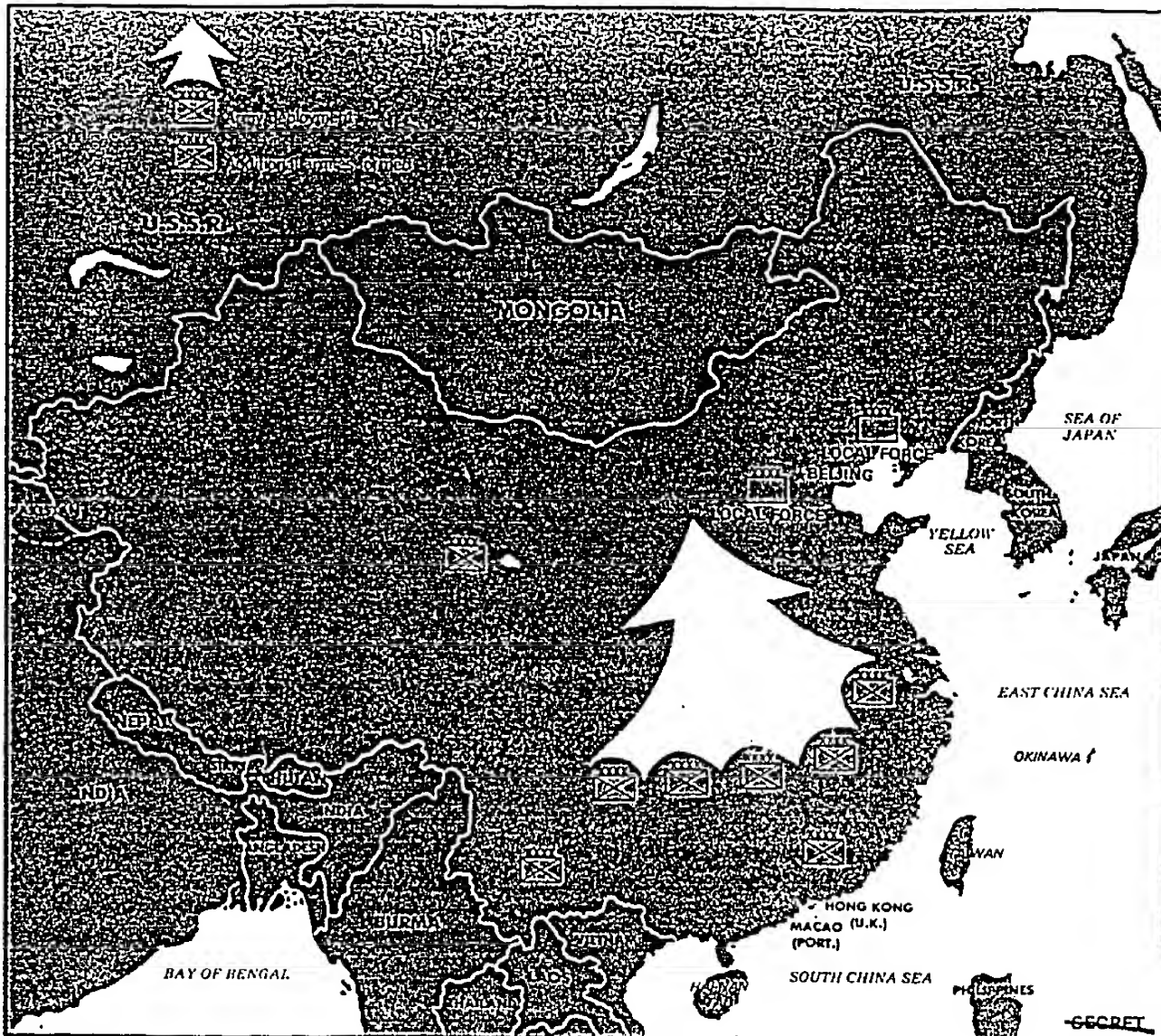


Figure 4. (U) Chinese response to 1969 border clashes

DOB-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Following the Sino-Soviet border clashes, the 69th and 24th Armies, which were deployed south and east of Beijing, effected a major shift to the northwest to assist the 65th Army in the defense of the capital (figure 5). These armies did not relocate to positions near the Sino-Mongolian border in recognition of poor defensive terrain and the clear disparity in mobility and firepower existing between their units and those of the Soviets. Instead, they developed defensive areas some 200 kilometers back from the border on favorable terrain along likely avenues of approach into the Beijing area. The 65th Army was charged with the mission of guarding the main invasion route leading into the city of Zhangjiakou. To help accomplish this mission, a large defensive area, extending about 70 kilometers on an east-west axis, was constructed north of the city. The defensive area consisted of artillery and mortar caves and positions, antitank gun bunkers, extensive personnel trenching, and antitank ditches. The effort expended on the defensive area clearly indicates that the Chinese feel that if Zhangjiakou were to be overrun, Beijing's position would become untenable.

(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL) It is within these major defenses well back from the border that the Chinese feel the main battle for Beijing will take place. The defensive areas are designed to stop or disrupt Soviet attack momentum, thereby setting up the conditions for a Chinese counteroffensive. Commenting on how the battle will be fought within the defensive areas, the Chinese have stated:

...our troops may construct advantageous positions along the roads which the enemy tanks must travel, set up all sorts of weaponry, force the enemy tanks to change their line of advance, to cut their speed, and transform a horde of tanks into small groups and small groups into individuals. At this point, our infantry can utilize emplacements or natural-terrain configurations to swiftly effect a penetration of the horde, get close in among the tanks themselves, actually penetrate the enemy's nest, hit them from behind, concentrate fire in close combat, and swiftly knock out the enemy tanks. Each tank hit decreases the enemy force, the tank horde is eventually more and more dispersed, and their mutual protective firepower is weaker and weaker. Meanwhile, we can swiftly redeploy our troops and firepower, control local superiority and initiatives at all times, and take advantage of the gaps created to wipe out other tanks, and eventually achieve the ultimate objective of totally destroying the enemy forces.

(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL) The Zhangjiakou defensive area, as part of an integrated defense of Beijing, would appear at first glance to smack of the "block-house" and "build defense works everywhere" mentality. However, the proponents of luring deep would argue that the defensive area conforms to all the principles of the strategy. The Soviets striking out of Mongolia are not met well forward in the border area by main force units; Soviet strengths on the plains of Mongolia are avoided and the Chinese strength of good defensive terrain is maximized. Furthermore, the Soviets, upon reaching Zhangjiakou, would have extended lines of communication, particularly since the existing transportation network in Mongolia is austere. Taking all these factors into consideration, the Chinese feel that a successful ground force defense of the capital is possible and that Mao's dictum "We must hold...territory whenever the balance of forces makes it

~~SECRET~~

possible" can be carried out. The luring deep supporters would also state that while mobile warfare is the only decisive form of warfare, positional warfare and guerrilla warfare have their place within the strategy. In his writings, Su Yu noted that Mao had accepted the extensive use of positional warfare in the later stages of the Korean Conflict, had "highly evaluated this kind of positional warfare, and thus gave us more guidance for constantly developing our tactics and for flexibly using different operations in light of objective conditions." Today, these objective conditions include the political and psychological importance of Beijing--an importance which transcends that of Yanan.

~~(S/NOPFOR/UNINTEL)~~ The continuing improvement of the Zhangjiakou defensive area would suggest that the Chinese remain committed to the value of the defensive area concept within the luring deep strategy (figure 6). However, it is necessary to stress that while the Chinese apparently consider the defense of Beijing to be feasible and have committed sizable forces to accomplish that mission, they will continue to implement the luring deep strategy should the city fall into Soviet hands.

c. The Defense of Beijing and Shenyang MRs

~~(S/NOPFOR/UNINTEL)~~ The Zhangjiakou defensive area is only one portion of the overall defense network in north and northeast China. When this regional network is viewed in its entirety, the application of the principles of the luring deep strategy to the defense of Beijing and Shenyang MRs is evident. An examination of the deployment pattern of Chinese ground forces in these MRs is useful to demonstrate not only how the area will be defended but also how the Chinese view their own defense capabilities.

~~(S/NOPFOR/UNINTEL)~~ It is noteworthy that the overall deployment pattern of Chinese Army units in Beijing and Shenyang MRs has not changed substantially over the past 10 years. Additional local force artillery-heavy garrison divisions have been created in the Da Hinggan Ling mountain range facing Mongolia, but there has been no significant reinforcement of this general area by main force army units since the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969.

~~(S/NOPFOR/UNINTEL)~~ The disposition of ground units by type and density clearly shows that the Chinese plan to accept a rather deep penetration of Shenyang MR and to offer increasing resistance as the Soviets attack farther into China. As shown at figure 7, the immediate defense of the Sino-Soviet border is provided by numerous border defense units. These lightly armed infantry forces have no tanks and only limited organic artillery support, and thus are not organized or equipped to stop a major Soviet invasion. They essentially act as a tripwire to provide early warning of attack, man checkpoints on border roads, and conduct surveillance of the frontier. There is 1 border defense division and 19 border defense regiments performing these functions in Shenyang MR; 4 such regiments are found in immediate border areas of Beijing MR.

~~SECRET~~

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Farther back from the border in favorable defensive terrain, the Chinese have positioned numerous garrison divisions and regiments. These units are heavily equipped with a wide range of weapons including recoilless rifles, mortars, antiaircraft artillery, rocket launchers, field guns, and gun-howitzers. While its artillery firepower is impressive, the garrison division has a complement of only 1,300 infantry soldiers out of a total strength of around 9,000 troops. Unlike a main force division, which is intended for strategic deployment anywhere in China, a garrison unit has a local defense mission and therefore has little organic mobility. Assuming a logical correlation between Tables of Organization and Equipment (TOE) and intended capabilities, the mission of the garrison units becomes clear. Situated on likely avenues of approach, their primary tasks are to slow down a major Soviet attack, disrupt attack momentum, and inflict maximum damage on the invading force. This mission will be accomplished primarily with indirect and direct artillery fire. The combat support character of these units will limit the ability of organic infantry to man a defensive line strong enough to stop a determined attack. The lack of mobility assets also suggests that these units will not conduct an organized delay and withdrawal to positions deeper in China.

~~(C)~~ The role to be played by these garrison units conforms to the principles of the luring deep strategy. They require the Soviets to pay a greater price for their continuation of the attack, and weaken the strength of the Soviet offensive for the eventual change in the military balance. True to luring deep, the garrison units require the Soviets to fight for every inch of territory; in conjunction with local militia units, they also participate in "active defense." Although these units either will be bypassed or overrun by the Soviets, loss of the units would not have a significant impact on overall Chinese warfighting capabilities.

~~(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL)~~ Farther behind the garrison units are the Chinese main force infantry and armored divisions. These units, which are the best trained and equipped of all the ground forces, have the primary mission for the strategic defense of China. As figure 7 shows, these divisions are deployed primarily in the mountainous areas east and south of the Manchurian Plain. This deployment pattern indicates that the Chinese, while resisting a Soviet penetration of northern and western Shenyang MR with the border defense and garrison units readily available, expect that the major battles will be fought in the defense of Beijing, the North China Plain, and southern Shenyang. Geng Biao's statement that current defense planning called for a strategic retreat 500-1,000 kilometers into the countryside is given additional validity when juxtaposed with this deployment pattern.

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Main force troop dispositions in Shenyang and Beijing MRs in conjunction with the Zhangjiakou defensive area indicate not only that the luring deep strategy is in effect but also that the Chinese have established a general defensive alignment by virtue of these unit deployments. This defensive trace runs along a line from the Jining defensive area in Inner Mongolia, across Zhangjiakou and the mountainous area north of Beijing, into southern

~~SECRET~~

Shenyang MR and north up to the cities of Changchun and Jilin. Along this trace, the Chinese may well feel that the combination of resistance from local force units and militia, coupled with overextended Soviet supply lines, will create the conditions favorable for a more stubborn defense. In conjunction with a conventional positional defense of selected key areas, main force infantry and armored divisions will then conduct strong counterattacks to annihilate the enemy. This defensive trace gives greater significance to Defense Minister Xu Xiangxian's comments pertaining to luring deep: "Luring the enemy in deep means organizing a strong defense with priorities well-placed...leading him (the enemy) to battlefields prepared and organized in advance....and....concentrating our superior forces to wipe out the enemy units one by one."

~~(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL)~~ The Chinese commitment to the defense of Beijing, the North China Plain, and southern Shenyang will be a determined one, but the failure of the defense will not mark the end of Chinese resistance. As noted earlier, Deng Xiaoping considers that the fall of Beijing might occur. If the Soviets continue their attack, a new defense line will be established on the Yellow River and, if that fails, another might be constructed at the Yangtze River. The luring strategy will be applied again and again until the enemy is worn down in a protracted war. As Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Xiuquan recently stated, "if the USSR has no resolve to fight for a decade, there is no way to fight us."

d. The Defense of Heilongjiang Province

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ Although the Chinese have committed substantial forces to the defense of selected key areas in Beijing MR and southern Shenyang MR, the current deployment of ground force units in northern Shenyang MR indicates that the critics of luring deep have not been effective in persuading the leadership to accord the same status to the key industrial centers in Heilongjiang Province. As noted earlier, the Chinese attache's recent statement that the industrial and strategic sites in Heilongjiang require modification of Mao's luring deep strategy suggests that considerable discussion centers around increasing the defense posture of such cities as Qiqihar and Harbin and the Daqing oilfields. Despite the area's strategic and economic significance and the presence of border defense and garrison units closer to the border, Heilongjiang and portions of Jilin Province would fall into Soviet hands if the luring deep strategy is employed. The loss of these important urban-industrial complexes would, indeed, be difficult for the Chinese to accept. For example, Qiqihar is a major producer of railcars, machine tools, and munitions, while Harbin is a strategic rail center and producer of aircraft and electric powerplant equipment. The Daqing oilfields, also located within Heilongjiang, produce about half of China's total oil output.

~~(S/NOFORN/UNINTEL)~~ Currently, the main force defense of Heilongjiang is entrusted to the 23d Army (figure 8). The deployment of its three subordinate divisions clearly suggests that these units have the mission of defending the key cities in the province: the 69th Infantry Division is located at Qiqihar; the Army headquarters and 73d Infantry Division are found at Harbin; and the 67th Infantry Division is deployed at Mudanjiang. The Army's only tank regiment is located in the vicinity of the Daqing oilfields. With its divisions located in

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

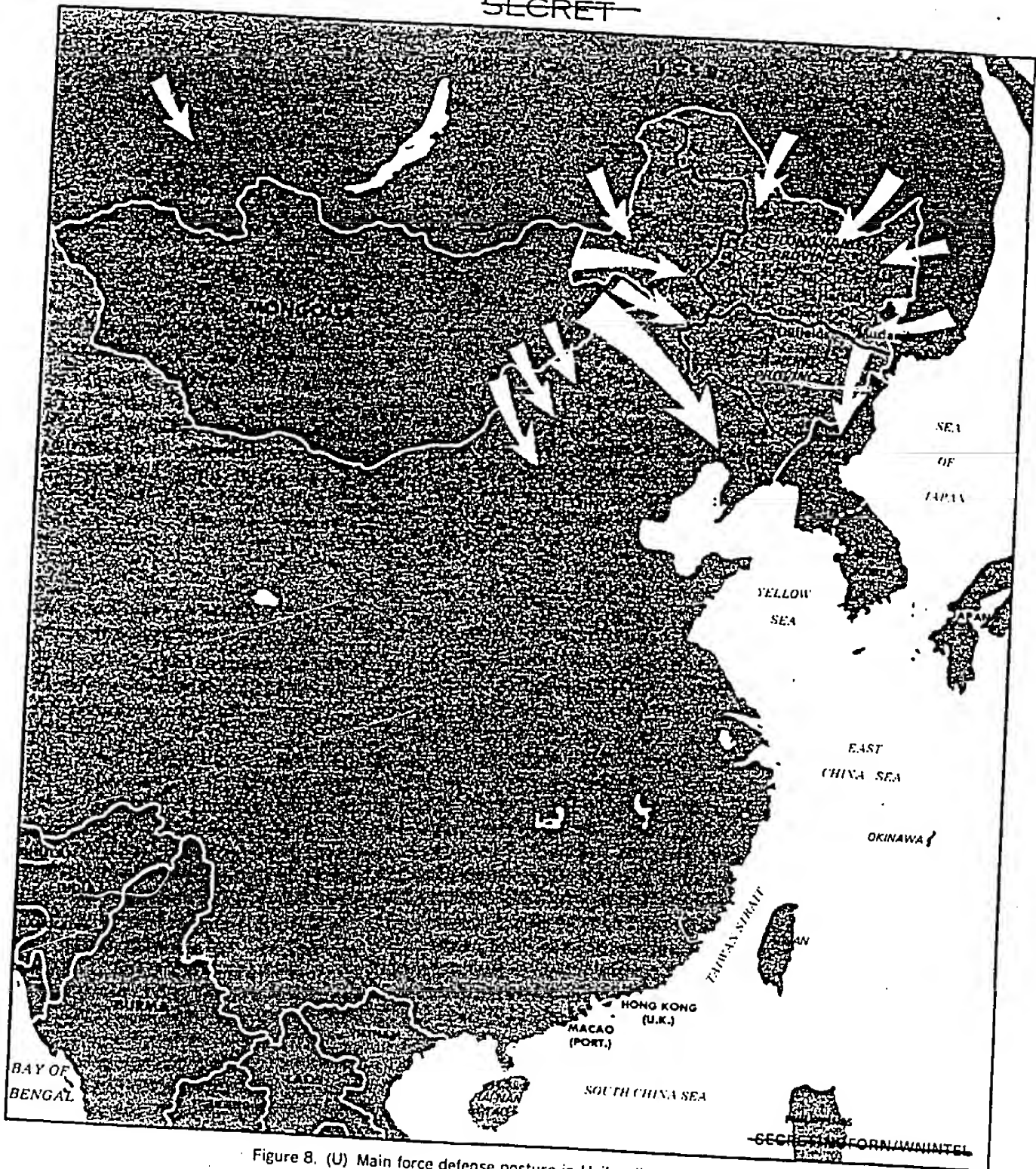


Figure 8. (U) Main force defense posture in Heilongjiang Province

DOB 2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

or near these cities, with the Army dispersed over a 400-kilometer width of Heilongjiang, and with little mobility, the 23d Army has little capability to mass and halt a major Soviet force advancing along any of the possible invasion routes into Heilongjiang.

~~(S/NOFORN/INTEL)~~ This defense concept for Heilongjiang sharply contrasts with that of the Beijing and southern Shenyang area. The apparent lack of a strong commitment to the defense of the northernmost province with its vital industrial-oil complexes has undoubtedly troubled some defense planners. As noted in the LAD article, "Cities to Become Stalingrads in Event of Invasion," the question of defending cities such as those in Heilongjiang had become a "standing issue" in 1978. Critics of luring deep have argued not only that the cities should be turned into new Stalingrads but also that field armies, acting as the defense backbone, along with strong reserves should be deployed "in depth and at intervals" on advantageous terrain surrounding the cities. However, this call for a Beijing-like defense of Heilongjiang's cities and the oilfields has apparently fallen on deaf ears. No defensive areas similar to Zhangjiakou are known to have been constructed in Heilongjiang.

e. The Mobility Factor in the Defense of Northeast China

~~(S/NOFORN)~~ During the Sino-Vietnamese conflict of February-March 1979, the Chinese demonstrated the capability to move large units relatively quickly from other parts of the country to the Vietnamese border. The same capability exists to reinforce Heilongjiang in the event of an imminent Soviet attack. The Chinese rely primarily on rail transportation to move troops over great distances; in Northeast China, the rail system is considered the best in the country. Provided strategic warning of a Soviet buildup along the border is given, the Chinese can move a sizable number of units from southern Shenyang, Beijing, or Wuhan MRs to more forward areas in Heilongjiang.

~~(S)~~ The Soviets would welcome decisive engagements being fought in forward areas where the full might of their combat power could be applied without significant diminution resulting from extended lines of communications. Should the tide of battle run against the Chinese, the problem facing the Chinese Army then becomes one of conducting an organized delay or withdrawal from enemy contact. In this military situation, rail and road transportation could not be used to break contact with the Soviets. The Chinese would be forced to fight to the rear against an enemy whose mobility far exceeds their own. US Army doctrine states that the delay is the most demanding of all ground operations and requires highly competent, well-trained small units, and skillful small-unit leaders. It also warns that nonmechanized infantry divisions should not be given retrograde missions when faced by a mechanized enemy in terrain favorable to rapid cross-country movement. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that despite the mountainous terrain and swamps that make up portions of the topography of Northeast China, the area is conducive to armored and mechanized operations. For example, during the 1945 Soviet campaign against the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria, Soviet combined-arms forces swept across northeast China in 7 days. Terrain was not a significant factor hindering that operation.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

(C) While the Chinese could reinforce the Heilongjiang area and other parts of the Sino-Soviet border prior to a Soviet attack, such an action is unlikely for the reasons stated above. The disparity in mobility between Chinese and Soviet units weighs heavily in favor of the continued applicability of the luring deep strategy.

f. The Defense of Urumqi MR

(C) While debate over the suitability of the luring deep strategy to China's defense needs has centered around its application in northeast China, critics also have included western China, and specifically Urumqi MR, as an area requiring reassessment of the strategy.

(C) Urumqi MR, as one of the Sino-Soviet border regions, shares a 2,000-kilometer border with the USSR and has historically been an area of Sino-Soviet rivalry. The region is important in several respects. Geopolitically, it is China's largest military region and occupies a pivotal position in Central Asia. Urumqi also has extensive and valuable mineral deposits; it is a major source of uranium for China and important oil fields are located at Karamai and Dushanzi. Chinese sensitivity over the area has increased as a result of the construction of several nuclear and missile-related installations in the MR at Wushidala and Lop Nor (figure 9).

(C) Despite its significance, the MR has traditionally been militarily vulnerable to Soviet attack. This vulnerability has been a partial outgrowth of its great distance from the Chinese heartland, the sparsity and fragility of existing lines of communication, relative lack of good defensible terrain, and the past military priority given to defense of Beijing and Shenyang MRs. In light of these factors, the "luring deep" strategy has been ideally suited for Urumqi MR.

(C) In December 1978, concern over the vulnerability of the area was expressed in Beijing's important Guangming Daily. In an allegorical article, the newspaper advocated a stronger defense of Urumqi MR. Resurrecting a debate over defense strategy during the Ch'ing dynasty, the article noted that China had reinforced Xinjiang (Urumqi MR) in the 1870s in an effort to stall Russian moves into that area, despite counterarguments that troops were required to resist possible Japanese moves into Taiwan. According to this account, the Soviets gave up their attempts to annex the strategic region following the Chinese reinforcement of Xinjiang. The thrust of the article clearly suggested that some defense planners were not satisfied with Urumqi's defense posture.

(C) This concern over Urumqi MR's capability to deter or stall a Soviet drive into the MR was undoubtedly heightened in late 1978 as preparations for the attack on Vietnam were undertaken. Of particular concern was the possibility of a Soviet military action along the Sino-Soviet border in reaction to the forthcoming Vietnam invasion. In assessing the various military options available to Moscow, the Chinese recognized, as the Ch'ing dynasty had done, that Urumqi was very vulnerable and, therefore, the most likely sector for a Soviet reprisal attack.

~~SECRET~~

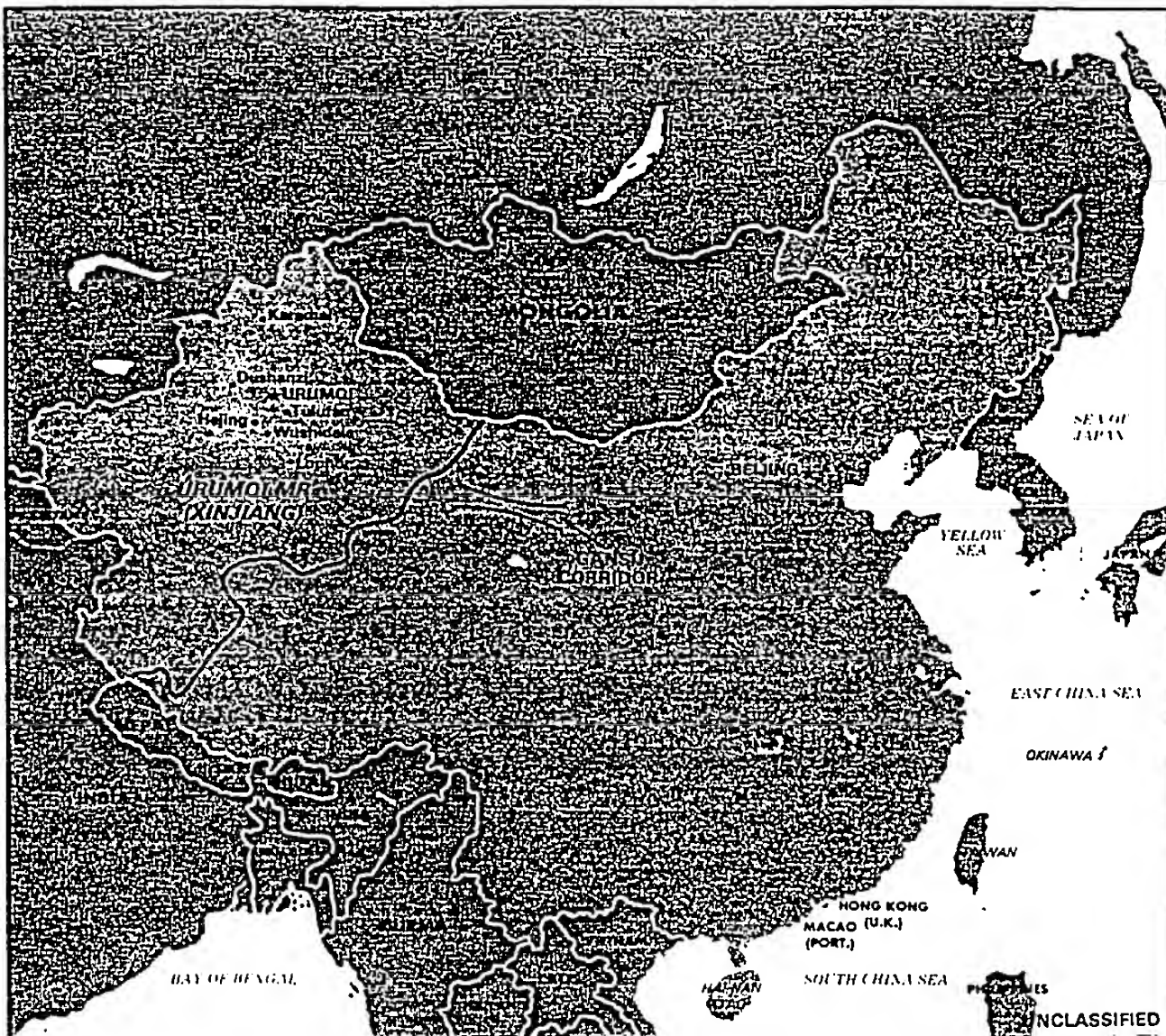


Figure 9. (U) Urumqi Military Region

DDB-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~(S/NOPORN)~~ One of the significant measures taken in anticipation of a Soviet attack was the evacuation of selected noncombatants from the capital city of Urumqi MR, despite the fact that it is located some 700 kilometers from the Sino-Soviet border. Such a precautionary measure would not have been taken if the Chinese felt that the Soviet could be stopped before the city was overrun. At this time, the high price that adherence to the luring deep strategy required was clearly brought home to the Chinese leadership.

~~(S/NOPORN/UNINTEL)~~ Probably as a result of this situation, the Chinese began a limited reinforcement of Urumqi MR during and following the Sino-Vietnamese Conflict. A new artillery division appeared in the capital city, and a new tank regiment was deployed to Hejing. In addition, a new infantry division moved into the Tulufan area southeast of the capital. The current ground force order of battle in Urumqi MR is depicted at figure 10.

~~(S/NOPORN/UNINTEL)~~ The deployment pattern of the new units--none of these units are closer than 500 kilometers from the Sino-Soviet border--suggests that the Chinese are continuing to adhere to the luring deep strategy for the defense of Urumqi MR. What is significant about the reinforcement of the MR is that the Chinese have apparently decided to offer a much more determined resistance to a Soviet attack than before. The Chinese have essentially "upped the ante" by requiring the Soviets to assemble a stronger and larger invasion force if their objective is to capture Urumqi City and drive on to the Gansu corridor. In this regard, comments made by Deng Xiaoping during the Sino-Vietnamese conflict regarding Urumqi MR are germane. He reportedly stated that the Soviets could probably seize Urumqi City but only if an entire Soviet corps were employed. In his assessment, one or two divisions would not be sufficient; furthermore, supplying this corps would be difficult over such a long distance. In the Vice Premier's mind, the reinforcement of the MR now requires the Soviets to assemble an even larger force than a corps and provide a commensurate increase in logistic support.

5. OUTLOOK

~~(S)~~ Chinese leaders acknowledge present shortcomings in ground force capabilities and aspects of the luring deep strategy. Military leaders are currently engaged in the study of modern war-fighting concepts and weapon systems required for a more effective defense against Soviet forces. It will take considerable time, however, before the new learning can be absorbed and the new defense modernization plans can be devised and implemented. It is likely, therefore, that there will be little change in the strategy and relative capabilities described in this report over the next 3 to 5 years.

~~(S)~~ It is expected that a number of ground force improvements will occur in the latter half of the 1980s, however, and these will enable China to improve its defensive capabilities in areas appreciably closer to its borders with Mongolia and the Soviet Union. These improvements include the following:

- Additional units (garrison, antitank, infantry, armor, and air defense).
- Improved mobility (mechanization of key infantry units and introduction of self-propelled air defense weapons and artillery).
- Improved/new weapons (antitank guided missiles, modern low-altitude air defense guns).

~~SECRET~~

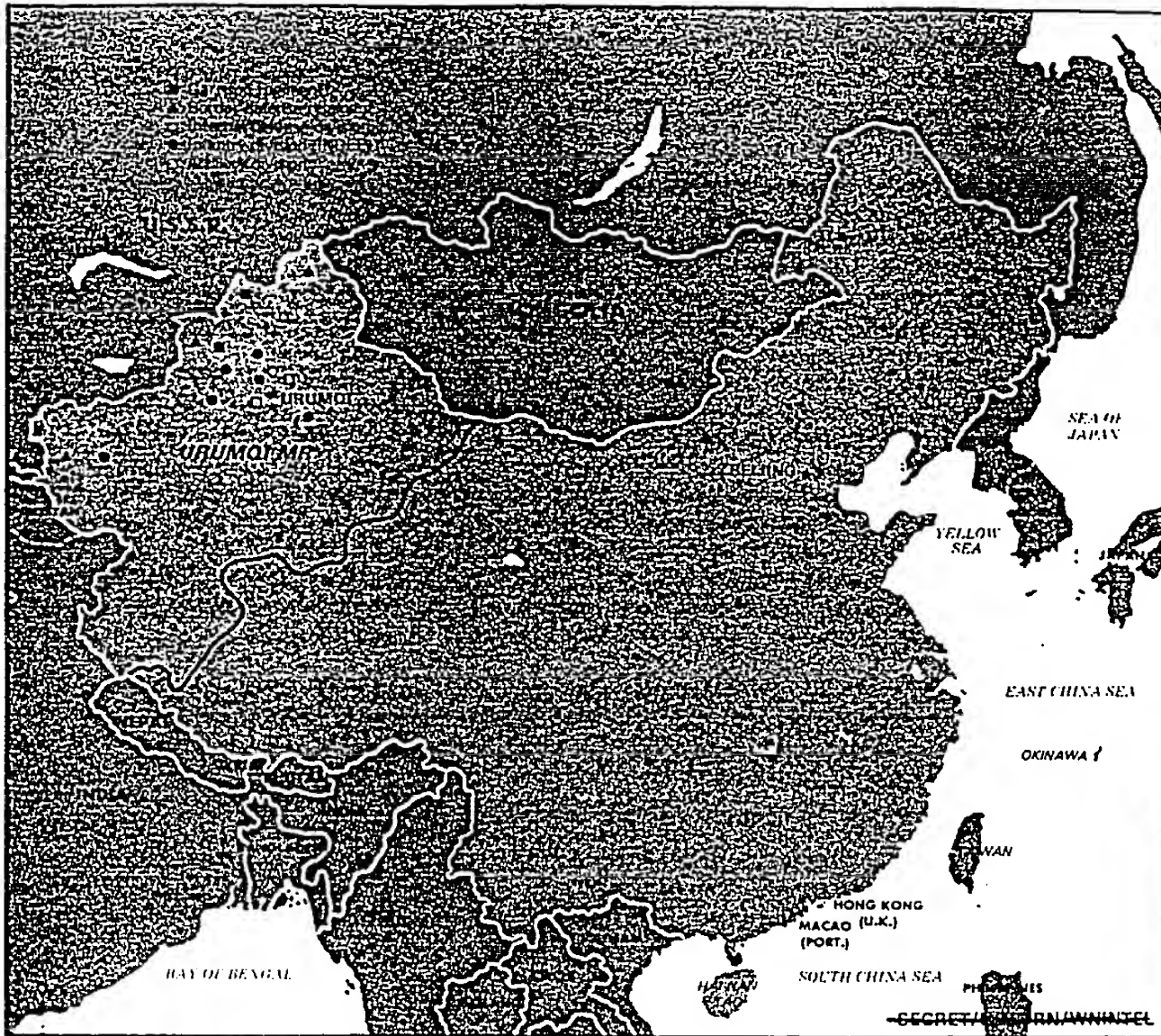


Figure 10. (U) Chinese ground order of battle in Urumqi Military Region

DD8-2610-31-80

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- Improved defensive chemical warfare capabilities.
- Possible introduction of tactical nuclear weapons in support of ground forces.

~~(S)~~ These enhancements are judged to be insufficient to enable the PLA to defend the integrity of China's northern borders. They probably also will not permit the successful defense of key forward areas, such as Heilongjiang Province. These enhancements will, however, enable the Chinese to exact a greater price from invading Soviet forces than currently is the case. The improvements will likely occur gradually, largely because of resource constraints and Beijing's perception that a major Soviet invasion is not imminent.

~~(S)~~ The luring deep strategy will, therefore, remain the key to China's defense against a major Soviet conventional attack. Modifications to it brought about by improved ground force defensive capabilities in selected forward areas will largely serve to enrich, not negate, the strategy. Such improvements may serve to deter Soviet attack on areas currently vulnerable because of light defenses. Major defensive battles can then be fought in these areas on terms more favorable to the Chinese than had been possible previously. In that sense, enhanced capabilities may allow the Chinese to retain or possibly improve their chances for the successful defense of Beijing and southern Shenyang MR within the overall context of the luring deep strategy.

~~(S)~~ China can adopt a pure forward defense strategy only if Sino-Soviet military capabilities in the border area approach parity. The ability to successfully defend China's northern borders or forward areas, such as Heilongjiang Province, would establish the conditions for abandonment of the luring deep strategy. In the meantime, the luring deep strategy will be continuously modified and adapted to take into account new Chinese military capabilities. The adoption of a forward defense posture, however, is beyond China's capability in the 1980s, and may even be unattainable by the end of the century, particularly given current national priorities. The national modernization effort is aimed not only at China's armed forces but at its economic, scientific, and political bases as well.

6. CONCLUSIONS

~~(S)~~ China's luring deep strategy has its roots in the formative period of the Chinese Communist movement. The basic condition of military inferiority which dictated its adoption during the 1920s and 1930s still prevails in 1980. The strategy, then and today, has been adopted out of necessity not volition. In fact, Chinese leadership espousal of the strategy is reluctant and conditional. Any sentimental attachment to its past accomplishments would not prevent its rapid replacement if a viable alternative existed.

~~(S)~~ The controversy that has surrounded the strategy since its inception has been an emotional one in view of its obvious deficiencies. Clearly, luring deep does not preserve the territorial integrity of China. For a nation whose modern history has witnessed territorial encroachments, first from the Western powers and later by the Japanese, this inadequacy is psychologically difficult for the Chinese to accept. Moreover, while the strategy has the capability to deal with a major Soviet ground invasion, it is not effective in dealing with a medium-scale and limited-objective attack. For example, the implementation of the strategy provides the Chinese with little ability to stop a Soviet invasion

~~SECRET~~

force of 15 to 20 divisions before this force had seized important areas of Heilongjiang Province or Xinjiang. This deficiency of the strategy has been recognized and condemned by the critics of the strategy throughout the past two decades.

(e) The apparent Chinese inability to deter a limited Soviet attack will endure for a long period until the Chinese can significantly add to their defenses in more forward areas. In the meantime, Beijing is forced to counter this weakness by trying to convince Moscow that even a limited conflict would eventually lead to a protracted war. Beijing will also continue its active antihegemony foreign policy designed in part to bring international pressure on Moscow to deter any Soviet military action against China.

(e) Despite these inadequacies, the Chinese consider the strategy to be an effective deterrent to a large-scale Soviet ground attack. Luring deep insures that the Soviet invaders will not achieve a quick, decisive, and low-cost victory. Even if the Soviets halt their offensive to consolidate their gains, the initiative will pass to the Chinese, who will then adopt the "wear and tear" tactics for which they are famous. For the Soviet military planner, the prospects of a protracted war, with long-term commitment of sizable numbers of Soviet troops, and the exorbitant expense in terms of money and casualties, loom as significant deterrent factors to a major conventional land invasion.

(e) During the 1980s, the luring deep strategy will remain a significant deterrent to a Soviet invasion. Only if the Chinese defense modernization program succeeds in narrowing the military capabilities gap with the Soviets can the Chinese adopt a new strategy for the maintenance of China's territorial integrity.